

## Message Text

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TAGS: PGOV, ELTN, CA

SUBJECT: MARITIME PREMIERS SPEAK OUT ON FEDERAL  
TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

REF: CONGEN A-4, 1/20/76

1. THE PREMIERS OF THE THREE MARITIME PROVINCES HELD THEIR TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF MARITIME PREMIERS ON FEBRUARY 2-3, 1976 AT BRIDGEWATER, NOVA SCOTIA. AS IS GENERALLY THE CASE THE TALKS WERE PRIVATE AND A SERIES OF ROUTINE COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF MEETINGS COVERING SUCH MATTERS AS LOBSTER LICENSING, RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REGIONAL TREASURY BOARD AND OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION.

2. FOLLOWING THE MEETING, HOWEVER, ALL THREE PREMIERS USED OCCASION TO SAY THEY HAD GRAVEST MISGIVINGS OVER NEW FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION POLICIES. THEY CRITICIZED FEDERAL TRANSPORT MINISTER OTTO LANG FOR THE APPARENT SUGGESTION THE RAIL SERVICE SHOULD BE SEVERELY CURTAILED AND THAT FULL COSTS SHOULD BE BORNE SOLELY BY THOSE USING TRANSPORT SERVICES . THEY ALSO SAID

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THAT THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT THE RATIONALE OF THE

USER-PAYS MIGHT BE EXTENDED TO SUCH THINGS AS HARBOR FACILITIES, AIRPORTS AND OTHER FACETS OF TRANSPORTATION. IF SO, THIS WOULD SEVERELY REDUCE SUCH FACILITIES AND RAISE COSTS SHARPLY TO CONSUMERS AND GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION .

3. PREMIER ALEX CAMPBELL OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND SAID MR LANG S POLICY LEFT HIM COLD AND CONFUSED . HE SAID THAT NOTIONS THAT A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM COULD SERVE AS A DEVELOPMENT TOOL CONTRADICTED THE IDEA THAT IT COULD ALSO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT. THE PREMIER POINTED TO THE APPARENT SHIFT OF INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION COSTS TO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND THOSE USING THE SYSTEM AND SAID WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE NOTION THAT THEREIS NO FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY .

4. PREMIER REGAN OF NOVA SCOTIA SAID THE REDUCTION OF RAIL SERVICE IN FAVOR OF OTHER FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF ENERGY CONSERVATION AND WONDERED HOW INCREASED USE OF TRUCKS AND BUSES INSTEAD OF RAILWAYS COULD SQUARE WITH INCREASED CONCERN FOR EFFICIENT USE OF ENERGY.

5. PREMIER RICHARD HATFIELD OF NEW BRUNSWICK SAID THAT LANG S NEW POLICY MUST HAVE BEEN LOCKED UP BEFORE PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU MADE HIS CONTROVERSIAL NEW YEAR S STATEMENT ON A NEW SOCIETY. THE PREMIER STATED THAT IN CANADA THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN USED AS A DEVELOPMENT TOOL. NOTHING CAN DEFEAT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FASTER THAN TRYING TO MAKE TRANSPORTATION SELF-SUFFICIENT.  
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